Explanatory Notes for the 1999 Academic Performance Index Report

These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *1999 Academic Performance Index Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details with respect to Academic Performance Index (API) calculations, growth target calculations, and ranking procedures beyond the explanations and footnotes that appear on the report.

The Public Schools Accountability Act

The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999), requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools and publish school rankings based on these indices. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets either API growth or performance targets is eligible for rewards under the Governor's Performance Award Program. If a school fails to meet its annual growth target, it may be identified for the Immediate Intervention / Underperforming Schools Program (II/ USP).

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education:

- adopted a 1999 base-year API
- defined the five-percent annual API growth target
- established an interim statewide API performance target

These actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Report*. The report includes each school's 1999 API, its statewide API rank by type of school (elementary, middle, and high), and its API rank when compared to schools with similar background characteristics, as defined by the PSAA.

Eventually, the API will incorporate a number of indicators; however, for 1999 the API will consist solely of results from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment that is administered in conjunction with the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Other legally-required indicators are unavailable for inclusion in 1999.

Core Elements

Certain core elements appear throughout the 1999 API Report. They include:

- 1999 Percent Tested
- 1999 API
- 1999 Statewide Rank
- 1999 Similar Schools Rank
- 1999-2000 Growth Target
- 2000 API Target

Percent Tested

This percent is calculated by dividing the number of students who participated in the

1999 STAR by the total enrollment in grades tested. Enrollment is based on the October 1998 California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) School Information Form. Since the CBEDS enrollment is collected at a different time of the school year than the STAR is administered, it is possible that the calculated percent will exceed 100. However, the percent is capped at 100, and this is what would appear on the report.

1999 API

The 1999 API summarizes a school's performance on the 1999 STAR. The API is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on STAR content area tests as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs). In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see below, page 6). For details on the calculation of the 1999 API, please consult the document titled *1999 Base Year Academic Performance Index (API)*, which is accessible through the PSAA web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/psaa>.

Statewide Rank

All schools that receive APIs are ranked in deciles by grade level of instruction: elementary, middle, and high. A rank of 10 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. Each decile in each school type contains 10% of all schools of that type.

Similar Schools Rank

All schools that receive APIs are also ranked in deciles by school type when compared to schools with similar characteristics. The PSAA specifies these characteristics to include:

- Pupil mobility
- Pupil ethnicity
- Pupil socioeconomic status
- Percentage of teachers who are fully credentialed
- Percentage of teachers who hold emergency credentials
- Percentage of pupils who are English language learners
- Average class size per grade level
- Whether the schools operate multitrack year-round educational programs

To derive these ranks, the CDE employed standard statistical procedures to generate a school characteristics index. All legally-required characteristics were considered as part of these procedures. The characteristics index was then employed in the following fashion to determine the "similar schools rank" of an individual school:

- A comparison group for an individual school was formed by treating that school's characteristics index as a median and taking the fifty schools immediately above and the fifty immediately below by characteristics index. In the event that the individual school's characteristics index was within fifty of either the top or the bottom of the statewide distribution, that school's comparison group became either the top 100 schools by characteristics index or bottom 100 as appropriate.
- The 100 schools in the comparison group were separated into deciles according to the value of their 1999 APIs.
- The API of the individual school was then compared to the APIs of the schools in its comparison group.
- The individual school was assigned the appropriate decile rank.

Growth Target

A school's growth target is calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 1999 API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For any school with a 1999 API of 781 to 799, the annual growth target is one point. Any school with an API of 800 or more must maintain an API of at least 800.

API Target

The API target is the sum of the 1999 API and the growth target, except for schools with a 1999 API of 800 or more.

Structure of the Report

The *1999 API Report* is composed of two parts:

1. *List of Schools*
2. *School Report*

List of Schools

This list includes all schools in a district for which the CDE has calculated an API. The schools are listed alphabetically by type (elementary, middle, and high). **The PSAA requires that schools be placed in one of these three types of schools for purposes of school rankings.** Schools with non-traditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type that they chose when they were assigned a CDS (county-district-school) code.

The CDE did not calculate APIs for:

- Schools with fewer than 100 pupils with valid Stanford 9 test scores
- County-administered schools
- Community day schools
- Alternative schools
- Continuation schools
- Independent schools

By law, these schools will be part of alternative accountability systems to be developed by July 1, 2000. **In addition, a school must test at least 65 percent of students in each STAR content area in order to receive an overall API.** Schools that failed to do so will not receive an API in 1999 and do not appear on the list of schools. This was done to ensure the statistical stability of API growth calculations, which will be used to determine whether schools are eligible for rewards or subject to interventions.

School Report

A *School Report* is generated for each school on the *List of Schools*.[1] The *School Report* includes:

For Elementary and Middle Schools:

1. *Summary for Grades 2-8*
2. *Schoolwide API for Grades 2-8*
3. *Subgroups for Grades 2-8*

For High Schools:

1. *Summary for Grades 9-11*
2. *Schoolwide API for Grades 9-11*
3. *Subgroups for Grades 9-11*

Summary Report

Along with the school's 1999 API, rankings, and growth target, the first page of the School

---

[1] **For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9:** The *School Report* for these schools
- integrates the API from grades 2-8 with that from grades 9-11 into a schoolwide API
- provides an overall school growth target for 2000
- calculates an overall API for any numerically significant subgroups.

These schools also receive schoolwide API reports for grades 2-8 and for grades 9-11 as well as corresponding reports for any numerically significant subgroups.

Report includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index was based. The data on which the percentages and rates rest were collected from three sources:

1. October 1998 CBEDS data collection (ethnic/racial distribution, information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and class size)

2. Spring 1999 R30-LC (percentage of English language learners)

3. 1999 Stanford 9 student header sheets (information on parental education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, school mobility)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS or the R-30LC:

· The percentages of students were based on all students enrolled in a school, not just those pupils enrolled in grades that were tested as part of the STAR program.

· It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories; therefore, the total of the percentages for "Fully credentialled teachers" and "Teachers with emergency credentials" may exceed 100.

· Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).

· "Core" reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the Stanford 9 student header sheet:

· School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year as indicated on the header sheet. It is used as a background characteristic only. The criterion for excluding a score from the API calculation is **district** mobility, i.e., any student who first attended the district in the current year.

The Schoolwide API

The second page of the school report provides a detailed breakdown of how the 1999 API was calculated, including the calculations for performance bands and content areas. In deriving the 1999 API, the sum of the content area scores has been rounded to the nearest whole number.[2]

The number of tests that contributed to the scores in each content area is also presented. When the 1999 API differs significantly from your own estimate of a school's API, first compare the number of tests, i.e., pupil records, that appears in the School Report to the number included in your calculations. The inclusion or exclusion of one additional pupil record may easily result in a discrepancy of one point or more.

In deriving a school's API, the CDE employed the same exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet.

1. A pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).

_____

[2] **For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9:** The API for these schools is the average of the APIs for the two grade configuration segments weighted by the number of pupils with valid scores in the two segments. For example, for a K-12 school, the API is the weighted average of the APIs for grades 2-8 and for grades 9-11.

2. A record was excluded if any of the following four test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all content areas:
   a. Braille
   b. flexible scheduling
   c. revised test format
   d. use of aids and/or aides

3. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the percentile rank for that content area is not between 1 and 99.

4. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for that content area was marked "yes" for any of the four reasons under #2 above.

In addition, to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, a record is excluded if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR header sheet.

Subgroup APIs and Growth Targets

The final component of the School Report is a summary of 1999 APIs for all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at that school. To be eligible for the Governor's Performance Award Program, a school must not only meet its growth target but also demonstrate comparable improvement for each numerically significant subgroup.

The PSAA defines a "numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" as a subgroup "that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school's total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils." Also, in light of the sizeable enrollments at many California schools, the State Board of Education has adopted an additional criterion. If a subgroup defined by ethnicity or socioeconomic disadvantage constitutes at least 100 pupils, i.e.,

at least 100 pupils with valid STAR scores, that subgroup is "numerically significant" and required to demonstrate comparable improvement, even if it does not constitute 15 percent of the school population. **These numerical criteria (15 percent, 30 or 100 pupils) will be computed on the basis of the number of pupils with valid STAR scores for that subgroup.[3]**

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 1999 and 2000. Ethnic/racial subgroups include the following:

· African American not Hispanic
· American Indian or Alaska Native
· Asian
· Filipino
· Hispanic or Latino
· Pacific Islander
· White not Hispanic

According to the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, the "socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

1) Neither of the pupil's parents has received a high school diploma

OR

2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. There-

———————————————————

[3] **For schools with grade configurations that include both grades 8 and 9:** The subgroup APIs are determined in the same manner as the schoolwide API (see footnote # 2, p. 4).

fore, it is possible that the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

To determine whether or not a numerically significant subgroup demonstrated comparable improvement, it is necessary to compute the 1999 API for each subgroup. Under the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, "comparable improvement" requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the schoolwide growth target when its 2000 API is computed. To arrive at the subgroup target, first multiply the schoolwide target by .8 and then round the product to the nearest whole number.

There are four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with schoolwide APIs between 781 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target will be one point.

2. Regardless of the schoolwide API, subgroups already at or above 800 will have to continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.

3. In schools with 1999 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 will have to make growth of at least one point.

4. In instances where 80 percent of the schoolwide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equals the distance to 800.

Data Discrepancies
If there are discrepancies between the official APIs printed in the report and local estimated APIs, first determine that the same set of Stanford 9 test scores were used in both sets of calculations. One way to verify the number of student test scores used in the official API calculation is to begin by examining the STAR Internet reports. The exclusion rules (see pages 4-5) have already been applied on these reports. The next step is to apply the district mobility exclusion to these numbers in order to derive the number of student test scores used in the API calculations. At this point, if the number of student test scores match the official number of tests included in the API, grade by grade and for all content areas, then the API calculation results should match.

Background characteristics provided for the school are used only in the calculations of the similar schools rank.

Contacts
If you have further questions about the API, growth targets, school rankings, or numerically significant subgroups, please contact the Educational Planning and Information Center via e-mail at epic@cde.ca.gov or by phone at (916) 657-2273.